



UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA UNDERGRADUATE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

GOVERNOR JANET NAPOLITANO
REMARKS, AS PREPARED

MAY 17, 2003
TUCSON, ARIZONA



President Likins, members of the board of regents, faculty, honored guests, and to the graduating class of 2003:

Thank you very much for inviting me to be a part of this ceremony.

Today the University of Arizona bids a fond farewell to nearly 5,000 students. But President Likins, don't get too sentimental. After all, you aren't losing students so much as your alumni association is gaining a brand new crop of potential donors.

Congratulations to each member of the graduating class of 2003. Regardless of what degree is being conferred upon you, today marks the end of one great adventure in your life, and the beginning of the next.

Most of you are entering the job market at a challenging time, but you are armed with a great asset, a degree from the University of Arizona. This is something for which you have worked hard. It is a good foundation for your first career.

That's right, your first career. Chances are, you will pursue several in your lifetime, because that is the way of the modern American worker.

For most of you, it is no longer enough to have just one skill set, or just one career track in mind. You must be prepared to have several, because if you aren't ready to surf the waves of change, the working world that lies ahead is sure to leave you in stagnant waters.

I have no doubts that you are up for that challenge, though. You're living in your world now, not your parents'. The days of graduating from college and pursuing a single career are rapidly receding into the rear-view mirror of history.

You have spent your entire young lives in a kinetic world of constant change. So if your parents and this university have done their jobs right, then moving from one career too the next should come naturally to you.

And you'll have plenty of time to flourish in multiple careers, because you're going to be drawing paychecks for a very long time.

After all, you are the best-educated and healthiest generation in American history. Compared to those who have come before you, you will live longer and work later in life than any generation before you.

And as the years progress, you will begin to fill the void left by retiring Baby Boomers. The giant hole they will create by leaving the workplace will provide you with an unprecedented variety of career advancement opportunities.



Suffice it to say that this education of yours had better have staying power, because you'll be using it for a very long time.

Not to worry, though. Your diploma comes with an extended warranty. It has heft. I signed your diplomas, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

After all, you are now graduates of the University of Arizona, one of America's great public universities.

As Governor, when I talk about the need for Arizona to have an educated workforce ready for the challenges of the 21st Century, I'm talking about graduates like you.

You are the products of 16 to 20 years of public education, from kindergarten through PhDs.

Looking out at the sea of caps and gowns, knowing that beneath each mortar board is a bright future ready to take flight, I see the fulfillment of Arizona's promise to educate its citizenry.

As you leave this campus, you will begin to assume your roles as leaders – leaders in your families, your neighborhoods, your businesses and your communities. As the years wear on, you and your generation will assume more and more leadership of this world.

Gradually, you will inherit the world and all of its progress and all of its problems.

To be fully prepared to lead tomorrow's world, you and those who will follow behind you will need a good educational foundation.

You have that now. And as you get ready to take your place in the ever-changing world of the 21st Century, know that you have the power to direct whatever change awaits you.

Because, with all this musing about our future, here's the kicker. You don't get to just walk into that ready-made reality. You have to create it for yourselves, for your children, and for their children. This is what the University of Arizona has been preparing you for.

After all, as Andy Warhol once said, "They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourselves."

Find what needs changing. Find your talents and your passions. Apply the education you have just received. Find what needs changing and change it.

Congratulations and bear down.